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ABSTRACT

Writing in English in New Zealand today is being invigorated by the strength of the Maori oral tradition: its use of metaphor, its expression of Maori values. It is the Maori tradition that is the source of a unique New Zealand identity, which emerges through the language and literature of Aotearoa (New Zealand), the use of strongly rooted Maori myths and legends, and a landscape in which the Maori language is embedded. Most New Zealanders are now beginning to recognize that they live in a bicultural and bilingual society, after a post-World-War-II period in which literature curriculum usually meant English literature. In 1970, with the establishment of the National English Syllabus Committee, the teaching of English was no longer seen as an outpost of the British empire, but as a genuinely home-grown indigenous product. Two main streams of literature in English are now developing in New Zealand: the writing that derives from a European viewpoint and the writing which gains its impetus from the Maori perspective. These two streams also intersect and interconnect, since they share the experience of living in Aotearoa. Now that there is a positive current of interest in New Zealand literature teaching, the young tradition will need strengthening and nurturing. (NKA)

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TIHE MAURIORA : THE TEACHING OF LITERATURE IN AOTEAROA/NEW ZEALAND

A Paper Presented at the Fourth International Conference on the Teaching of English, held at Ottawa, Canada, May 11 - 16, 1986

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Tihe mauriora!

Ngā hau e wha,
ngā iwi e tau nei,
tena koutou katoa.

E ngā māte,
kua whētu rangitia,
haere, haere, haere.

Haere ki te wāhi pūmau,
mō tātou.

E ngā māte,
e wha nei au,
kua tangihia.
E whakaeke nei
ki runga o ngā māte
o tēnei marae.
Haere, haere, haere.

Karanga mai ki au,
e whai nei i ngā taonga,
o ngā tupuna.

E aku rangatira,
tēnā koutou,
mō tā koutou mihi
ki a au.

Ka nui te hari,
ka nui te koa.

No reira, tēna koutou,
tēnā koutou katoa.

Behold, there is life.

People of the four winds,
people gathered here,
greetings to you all.

To the dead, who are festooned,
on the breast of Sky Father,
farewell, farewell, farewell.

Go to your final resting place.

The dead whom I carry,
I have mourned.
I place on those who have

departed this marae.

Farewell, farewell, farewell.

Call us to seek the treasures
of our forebears.

Chiefs, thank you for
your welcome.
I am appreciative
and grateful.

Therefore greetings, greetings to
you all.

To begin with a mihi, or speech of welcome in Maori, is itself a statement about language in Aotearoa, a statement about its literature as I perceive it, and a statement about personal identity. Writing in English in New Zealand today is being invigorated by the strength of the Maori oral tradition : its use of metaphor, its ability to draw upon the imagery of the natural world, its expression of Maori values. For this reason it is appropriate to begin a talk about the teaching of literature in Aotearoa with a speech in Maori.

It is the Maori tradition which is the source of a unique New Zealand identity, and it is this theme of identity emerging through the language and literature of Aotearoa that I wish to explore today.

Aotearoa, or New Zealand, has a proud history. The word "Aotearoa" means the land of the long white cloud, a reference to the first sighting of the North Island by the Maori explorers who discovered the country on their sea voyages from Polynesia. But "Aotearoa" refers to more than a place : it is a landscape, an idea, a people. Aotearoa was discovered as far as we know, between one thousand and fifteen hundred years ago by the first Polynesian settlers, led by the myth encrusted, probably historical, figure of Kupe. Whether the exploits of Kupe are myth-encrusted history or historically-encrusted myth can probably never be determined absolutely. What is certain is that the stories of Kupe's adventures have been passed down through the oral culture of the Maori and are recognised today as the earliest literature of Aotearoa.

In te Ao Maori, the Maori world, the land and the landscape was (and is) a dominant force. Mountains, rivers, lakes, islands, bays promontories, beaches, harbours, valleys and settlements throughout New Zealand were named by the Maori, and many of these names carry stories which according to Maori myth go right back to the time of Kupe. Most New Zealand place names today are

still Maori and each place and each region in Aotearoa carries its own story. It is my argument that this is where the study of literature in New Zealand must begin, with its local habitation and its name. Work currently under way in New Zealand on developing a taha Maori in English (a Maori dimension in English) is beginning to explore this territory by using Maori myths and legends which are strongly rooted in particular places.

Issues to do with language are very much to the fore in New Zealand society in 1986. English is the dominant language, but many Maori people are taking steps to ensure the survival of the Maori language. The Maori people have therefore begun establishing a network of Te Kohanga Reo, or Maori language nests, for young pre-school children to learn the Maori language. Maori language syllabus committees have been set up by the Department of Education to give guidelines for the study of Maori language in primary and secondary schools. There is pressure to have the Maori language declared an official language in New Zealand. Contemporary Maori assertions of identity are calling attention to the linguistic and cultural expressions which make life in New Zealand unique. Most New Zealanders are now beginning to recognise that they are living in a bicultural and bilingual society.

Emergent Maori nationalism has forced a reconsideration of our national identity over the last decade, and in the process New Zealand literary concerns and directions have been transformed. The development of Maori writing in English over the last ten years has assisted in halting New Zealand's monocultural perception of itself, and has brought new challenges for the teacher of English. In New Zealand, English and Maori are complementary. Maori is the language of the tangata whenua, the indigenous people of New Zealand. The English language in New Zealand, and our national literature in English, are enriched and supported by the Maori language. It is Maori culture, and the special relationship between Maori and Pakeha, which provides the

source of a distinctive New Zealand identity. Maori writers today are helping both Maori and Pakeha discover who we are and where we are going. These explorations are beginning to appear in the literature students read in their English classrooms in New Zealand. But, it was not always so.

Let me illustrate through a personal anecdote. I was born in a town in the South Island of New Zealand called Rangiora (a Maori name). I grew up on a farm some miles away and at age 5 rode my pony three miles to the local sole charge primary school at a place called Springbank (whose English etymology will not have escaped you). These contrasts are a feature of life in New Zealand. One of the abiding memories of my early school years is a salutary lesson I learned about reading. The book I happened to be learning from was a traditional reader and I was assigned a particular nursery rhyme. It was familiar from my childhood, its familiarity an outcome of the essentially British cultural heritage I had absorbed. Reading it, I knew, would be no bother at all. Off I went, without any preparation:

> "Ding dong dell,
> Pussy's in the well.
> Who put her in?
> Little Tommy Thin.
> Who pulled her out?
> Little Johnny Stout."

I looked up at my teacher, having finished the reading, expecting instant accolade. "What a good boy am I", at least. But instead of a smile and praise, my teacher's face was set in lines of disapproval, though I could have sworn I caught a hint of a grin in one corner of his mouth. "Not good enough" he said. "Go over your reading tonight for homework."

That will be the day, I thought to myself. Not when I know it already off by heart. The next day I repeated the reading, with a similar result. I was puzzled, even dejected. I even began to entertain thoughts of self-doubt. Was it possible I had made a mistake?

That evening I climbed onto my father's knee and started to read to him.

"Ding dong dell,
Pussy's in the ...

"Stop. Try again."

"Why?"

"Just read what's there."

"OK".

"Ding, dong - oh!

Ding, dong, bell,
Pussy's in the well.
Who put her in?
Little Tommy Thing.
Who pulled her out?
Little Johnny Stout."

I had learned something about attending to print which I have never forgotten.

Reflecting on that incident some thirty-five years later, I am struck by what it reveals about the forms of literature taught in New Zealand schools at that time, and about the contrasts with what I take to be present day practice. The education I

experienced in New Zealand just after World War II (when the incident I have described took place) was still based very much on British models and British traditions. The early reading material presented to five-year-olds, if I am in any way a representative example, was largely British or at least European in its cultural orientation and heritage.

Similar pre-occupations were evident in the literature being written at about the same time in New Zealand by New Zealanders. Robyn Hyde's novel "The Godwits Fly", published in 1938, explores the relationship between England and New Zealand. Robyn Hyde belonged to a transitional generation of New Zealand writers, who were conscious of themselves as New Zealanders, yet were impelled towards England, the home of their ancestors, just as the godwit (a New Zealand bird) is impelled to its annual migration to Siberia.

"You were English and not English. It took time to realise that England was far away. And you were brought up on bluebells and primroses and daffodils and robins in the snow - even the Christmas cards were always robins in the snow. One day, with a little shock of anger, you realised that there were no robins and no snow, and you felt cheated; nothing else was quite as pretty."

When I was growing up as a fourth generation New Zealander, "home" was the farm in North Canterbury where I lived. But "home" also had another meaning to many New Zealanders. "Going back home" meant travelling back to Britain. I read about it in my poetry-book at school. It was written by Browning, and called "Home-Thoughts, From Abroad".

"Oh, to be in England
Now that April's there,
And whoever wakes in England
Sees, some morning, unaware,
That the lowest broughs and the brushwood sheaf
Round the elm-tree bole are in tiny leaf,
While the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough
In England - now".

April in England is the season of spring. In New Zealand it is autumn. The trees New Zealanders see are more likely to be totara, rimu, kauri or beech than elm trees. Birds to be found in the New Zealand bush (as the native forest is called) are the tui, weka or korimako, rather than the chaffinch. "White throats" and "swallow" mentioned further on in Browning's poem have quite different meanings for New Zealand students.

The discontinuity between the seasons in the northern and southern hemispheres, and the different flora and fauna of New Zealand are not of course insuperable barriers preventing response to English literature. But to read some English poetry in the antipodes is occasionally to be reminded that the world is built upside down.

Perhaps the poet Denis Glover spoke for most New Zealanders in his poem "Home Thoughts".

"I do not dream of Sussex downs
or quaint old England's
quaint old towns -
I think of what may yet be seen
in Johnsonville or Geraldine."

New Zealand schools in the immediate post-war period did not always use literature which originated in England. What was in existence then, and what was a forerunner of today's best

teaching practice in the teaching of reading in New Zealand primary schools, was the School Journal. The journal has been a regular free publication by the Department of Education to all New Zealand schools since 1910. Its main feature has always been, and still is, the presentation of printed material at an appropriate level of interest and readability for all students living in New Zealand.

It contains high interest material, both fiction and non-fiction, prose and poetry, written by recognised New Zealand writers for New Zealand children. This material, then, was an important part of the educational diet of New Zealand children in the post-war period and provided a useful indigenous corrective to the other essentially English material used as the basis for teaching resources and indirectly for the transmission of a particular cultural heritage.

My brothers and sisters who followed me to school were victims of a further attempt at cultural hegemony in the readers they were subjected to. They had the ill fortune to catch the "new wave" of modern readers which permeated New Zealand in the 1950's. I refer to "Janet and John". North Americans will no doubt be more familiar with their trans-Pacific pseudonyms, Dick and Jane. Janet or John, Dick or Jane, their cultural ancestors and heritage were clearly white, middle-class, moderately affluent, and Anglo Saxon to the core. In fact, Janet and John were totally stereotypical : in their sex roles, in their family formation, in their physical appearance and intellectual abilities, and in their ethnocentricity and their way of life. A little colonial England was being transplanted again across the world, this time in the South Pacific, and little New Zealanders, both Maori and Pakeha, were being indoctrinated with the expectation that this was indeed how everybody lived, spoke and behaved. Janeta and John symbolise for me how a canon of "English" literature became established in New Zealand primary schools during the 1950's.

In the secondary school of the same era, identical preconceptions were at work. While Janet and John had grown older, and had at least shed some of their stereotypes, the characters read about in literature remained essentially Anglo-Saxon. Cooking the literature cake was conducted according to a tried and trusted traditional recipe, as follows. Begin with the British base of an obligatory play by Shakespeare. Stir in a solid classic English novel from the nineteenth century (Dickens, Austen, Eliot, Thackeray or Hardy). Add a dollop of drama from the eighteenth century (Sheridan or Goldstone). Pour in a primer of poetry (a mess of metaphysicals, an assortment of Augustans, a rush of Romantics or a tirade of Tennyson). (A vase of Victorians would have been just too much. Crockery is so indigestible). Spice with some sauce from the States (say Twain or Melville). Mix in a melange of moderns (pre 1920, that is). Bake it all in the oven of a national three-hour examination.

While it was true that the literature generally studied in secondary schools of the 1950s was English in origin, there were voices which were emerging in New Zealand saying "I belong here". One such voice was Bruce Mason's, whose solo play "The End of the Golden Weather", first performed by the author in 1959, gave the Pakeha a mirror-image of the land and world we lived in.

"I invite you to join me in a voyage into the past, to that territory of the heart we call childhood. Consider, if you will, Te Parenga. A beach, three-quarters of a mile long, a hundred yards wide at low water. Rocks at either end: on the east, chunky and rounded, a squat promontory. The 'king' and 'queen' stand a few yards out from the shore: two squashed rock pillars with steps cut into their sides for diving in the summer. At high water, the sea will cover more than half of them. The rocks on the west are shallow, spreading into a terraced reef, shelving far out to sea. Here there is no smoothness. The surface of these rock shelves is jagged, cutting and tearing at the bare foot, fretted away by the corrosive sea. The receding tide

leaves deep pools here where sea anemones with fronts of red and black jelly wave coloured strings to entice the shrimps and sometimes a lone starfish lies marooned, diminishing in the sun. Ahead, across a narrow channel, central to vision and imagination, Rangitoto, enormous, majestic, spread-eagled on the skyline like a sleeping whale, declining from a central cone to the water in two huge flanges, meeting the sea in a haze of blue and green. It guards Te Parenga from wind and tempest: it has a brooding splendour.

The beach is fringed with pohutukawa trees, single and stunted in the gardens, spreading and noble on the cliffs, and in the empty spaces by the foreshore. Tiny red coronets prick through the grey-green leaves. Bark, flower and leaf seem overlaid by smoke. The red is of a dying fire at dusk, the green faded and drab. Pain and age are in these gnarled forms, in bare roots, clutching at the earth, knotting on the cliff-face, in tortured branches, dark against the washed sky.

Beside this majesty, the houses of Te Parenga have a skimped look. A low ridge curls upwards from the beach, flattening to accept the concrete ribbon on the main road north, an intermittent rash of shops on its margins, then the ridge rolls on and down to the mud-flats and mangroves of the upper harbour. The houses of Te Parenga face the sea, unlovely bungalows of wood and tin, painted red an brown to thwart the rodent air. At the end of the beach, before the main road north leaves it for ever a clot of buildings: shops, banks, the Council Chambers, the Anglican Church in wooden Gothic, cheek by jowl with the cinema - built to last - in brick.

It is only a hundred years since men dressed as chimneys, in top hats and black stove-pipes, women dressed as great bells, tiny feet clappers, stepped ashore at Te Parenga from a broad-bellied, wind-billowed ship. They brought with them grain and root, tilling and harvest; timber trees, fruit trees, flowers, shrubs,

grass, sheep, cows, horses, deer, pigs, rabbits, fish, bees; language, law, custom, clocks and coinage; Queen Victoria and her views on Heaven and Earth; The Trinity; Santa Claus and the imagery of snow where no snow will ever fall at Christmas; a thousand years of history, a shoal of shibboleths, taboos and prohibitions and the memory of a six-months voyage. They threw them all together in a heap and stepped ashore to slash the bush, banish the natives and pray silently far into the night. They left some of the pohutukawas, and Rangitoto was beyond their reach.

This is Te Parenga : my heritage, my world."

"My heritage, my world". That phrase was a signal for the next stage of development in the literature taught in New Zealand schools. A concerted attempt to develop in New Zealand schools a style of teaching literature based on books written for New Zealand conditions by New Zealand writers, was initiated in the late 1950s and early 1960s. The "Ready to Read" series, sponsored by the Department of Education, produced a numnber of readers for young children in the junior classes of primary schools. These books were based on the best theories of reading available at the time. In their own way these readers were literature for the very young in the best sense of the word. They were read; they were enjoyed; they spoke about the human condition which young children growing up in New Zealand could recognise.

Sylvia Ashton-Warner's "Spinsters" was written at the same time as these books were being tried out in New Zealand schools. Ashton-Warner's novel is a remarkable creative achievement. It shows a teacher at work who has an intuitive and instinctive sympathy for the language needs of the young Maori children in her classroom. Her philosophy of "releasing the native imagery of the child": is a remarkably poetic description of an idea give currency in a number of New Zealand primary schools of the period : children learn to speak, to read and to write by using

their own experience as the basis for language developmenmt. A feature of the first "Ready to Read" series produced in New Zealand in the 1960s was that the foundation of the programme was on books which worked as books, and which were based on experience the child was familiar with.

What was significant about the teaching of literature in New Zealand secondary schools during the 1960s was a movement away from reading textbooks where "potted" extracts with accompanying comprehension questions were answered, to a recognition that whole books ha a valid place within a literature curriculum.

While most of the literature studied consisted of novels, plays or poetry written in Britain or America, in some quarters there was an open mindedness towards New Zealand literature, and even on occasion, a willingness to admit that the indigenous literature of New Zealand had its place in a school curriculum. In practice this meant some New Zealand poetry and short stories were read, while New Zealand novels were regarded as suitable library reading if you were particuarly patriotic and liked the kiwi humour of, say, a Barry Crump. Innovative teachers were known who actually asked students to study "Man Alone" by John Mulgan, recognising that the title of that novel established a theme in New Zealand writing which was as important an emblem of national identity as Hemingway's and Faulkner's stories were in the development of American fiction. Such teachers were far in advance of the thinking of most practitioners of the art of English teaching in Aotearoa at the time.

1970 ushered in the establishment of the National English Syllabus Committee (NESC) in New Zealand, and in over a decade of curriculum development this committee had a major impct upon the teaching of English in New Zealand secondary schools. The ideas advocated by this group were based on the notions of growth through English first propounded at the Dartmouth seminar. In the process of their curriculum development work, the NESC

pursued an approach to the teaching of English which was firmly rooted in the perceptions, practices and insights of New Zealand teachers of English. The teaching of English in New Zealand was no longer seen as an outpost of the British empire, but a genuinely home-grown indigenous product. Part of the appeal of the NESC's crusading zeal to teachers of English was the validation of the language experience of all students living in New Zealand whatever their cultural background. An outcome of the acceptance of this position was the recognition that the teaching of New Zealand literature and had an important and significant place in the English classroom in Aotearoa.

It was not so much that reading New Zealand literature was perceived as "relevant" for New Zealand students, (though that word was certainly used to justify the practice of reading indigenous literature) but that the writing produced in New Zealand had a currency and an immediacy to our students which not only appealed to them, and was recognisable, but on reflection could be perceived as a cultural map which was charting our country's development. The contemporary writing of New Zealand artists were reflecting the adjustments to experience of the most sensitive members of our society.

Two main streams of literature in English are now developing in New Zealand : the writing which derives from a European or Pakeha perspective and the writing which derives its impetus from Maori values and the Maori way of life. Both streams are part of the mainstream of New Zealand writing and though the traditions and cultural heritage both draw upon are distinct, they also intersect and interconnect, since the writers who create New Zealand literature share the experience of living in Aotearoa.

A comparison of significant titles and authors, and publication dates of selected works from these two complementary traditions illustrates that the 1970s saw the emergence of the Maori writers in English. These Maori writers were certainly those who gained

increasing popularity among young people in English classrooms in New Zealand during the last decade.

1 New Zealand Writers in English whose cultural affiliation is European or Pakeha.

1922 "At the Bay" by Katherine Mansfield, one of her New Zealand short stories. An edition of her "Collected Stories" was published in 1945.

1939 "Man Alone" by John Mulgan, an influential early novel.

1957 "The God Boy" by Jan Cross, a novel widely read in New Zealand schools.

1964 "The Pohutukawa Tree" by Bruce Mason, a popular play used in schools which deals with the subject of Maori-Pakeha relationships.

1965 "Memories of a Peon" by Frank Sargeson, a novel.

1978 "Plumb" by Maurice Gee, the first novel of a trilogy.

1983 "Collected Poems" by James K Baxter.

1983 "To the Island" by Janet Frame, Part I of an autobiography by New Zealand's most talented woman novelist.

2 New Zealand Writers in English whose cultural affiliation is Maori.

1964 "No Ordinary Sun" by Hone Tuwhare, the first poetry collection in English published by a Maori writer.

1972 "Pounamu, Pounamu" by Witi Ihimaera, the first collection of short stories published in English by a Maori writer.

1973 "Tangi" by Witi Ihimaera, the first novel in English by a Maori writer.

1974 "Te Raukura" by Harry Dansey, the first published play by a Maori writer.

1975 "Waiariki" by Patricia Grace, the first collection of short stories published in English by a Maori woman writer.

1978 "Mahanga" by Vernice Wineera Pere, the first collection of poems by a Maori woman writer.

1978 "Mutuwhenua" by Patricia Grace, the first novel published in English by a Maori woman writer.

1982 "Into the World of Light" edited by D Long and Witi Ihimaera, the first anthology of writing in English by Maori writers.

1984 "The Bone People" by Keri Hulme. The first novel by a Maori writer to win the New Zealand Book Award for fiction. In 1985, "The Bone People" becomes the first novel by a New Zealand writer to win the Booker Prize.

These developments, it seems to me, illustrate that literature in New Zealand is now developing within its own national (or possibly even nationalist) context. What makes New Zealand unique is the presence of the Maori. The Maori language is embedded in the landscape, in the heart of Aotearoa. A Maori whakatauaki (or proverb) expresses the relationship between the people and the land.

"He whenua whaea - e kore e mate"

(The land is a mother who never dies).

To look at the map of New Zealand to be conscious of a cultural statement. To live in Aotearoa, whether you are Maori or Pakeha by descent, is to be aware that the Maori presence is an emblem of New Zealand identity. To the Maori, one's turangawaewae (standing group or stamping ground) is an essential aspect of personal freedom. One's whakapapa (or genealogy) is knowledge which establishes both individual and group identity. Maori values such as aroha (love) and manaakitanga (hospitality) are embedded in the fabric of Maori culture.

A surge of Maori nationalism in the last decade has made Pakeha New Zealand society begin to realise that New Zealanders have a stake in Maori culture. This movement has spawned a distinctive New Zealand literature of writing in English by Maoris, in which Maori values and attitudes are expressed and realised.

I believe it is absurd for young New Zealanders not to be most familiar with those writers and artists who reflect and focus the imaginative life which grows from the soil of Aotearoa. The writers in 1986 who are at the cutting edge of change in New Zealand society, writers like Witi Ihimaera, Patricia Grace and Keri Hulme, are those whose writing touches upon the impact of biculturalism on our society.

Let me illustrate something of the flavour of these writers by reading an extract from one author who captures an idiom that belongs distinctively to New Zealand. The reading is from a short story called "Beans" written by the Maori writer Patricia Grace.

BEANS

Every Saturday morning in the winter term I bike into town to play Rugby. Winter's a great time. We live three miles out of town and the way in is mostly uphill, so I need to get a good early start to be in town by nine. On the way in I don't get a chance to look around me or notice things very much because the going is fairly hard. Now and again where it gets a bit steep I have to stand up on the pedals and really tread hard. But it's great getting off to Rugby on a Saturday morning with my towel and change on the carrier, and pushing hard to get there by nine. It's great.

By the time I get to the grounds I'm realling puffing and I know my face is about the colour of the club-house roof. But I'm ready to go on though. I can't wait to get on the field and get stuck into the game; I really go for it. I watch that ball and chase it all over the place. Where the ball goes, I go. I tackle, handle, kick, run, everything. I do everything I can think of and I feel good. Sometimes it's cold and muddy and when I get thrown down into the mud and come up all mucky I feel great, because all the mud shows that I've really made a game of it. The dirtier I get the better I like it because I don't want to miss out on anything.

Then after the game I strip off and get under the shower in the club-room, and sometimes the water is boiling hot and sometimes cold as anything. And whatever it is, you're hopping up and down and getting clean, and yelling out to your mates about the game and saying is it hot or cold in your one.

I need a drink then. I get a drink from the dairy across the road and the dairy's always jammed full of us boys getting drinks. You should hear the noise, you should really hear it.

The going home is one of the best parts of all. I hop on my bike and away I go, hardly any pushing at all. Gee it's good. I can look about me and see everything growing. Cabbages and caulis, potatoes and all sorts of vegetables. And some of the paddocks are all ploughed up and have rows of green just showing through. All neet and tidy, and not much different to look at from the coloured squares of knitting my sister does for girl guides. You see all sorts of people out in the gardens working on big machines or walking along the rows weeding and hoeing; that's the sort of place it is around here. Everything grows and big trucks take all the stuff away, then it starts all over again.

But, I must tell you. Past all the gardens about a mile and a half from where I live there's a fairly steep rise. It's about the steepest part on the way home and I really have to puff up that bit. Then I get to the top and there's a long steep slope going down. It's so steep and straight it makes you want to yell and I usually do. That's not all though. Just as you start picking up speed on the down slope you get this great whiff of pigs. Poo. Pigs. It makes you want to laugh and shout it's such a stink. And as I go whizzing down the stretch on my bike I do a big sniff up, great big sniff, and get a full load of the smell of pigs. It's such a horrible great stink that I don't know how to describe it. We've got a book in our library at school and in it there's a poem about bells and the poem says 'joyous'. The joyous ringing of bells' or 'bells ringing joyously', something like that. Well 'joyous' is the word I think of when I smell the pigs. Joyous. A joyous big stink of pigs. It's really great.

It's not far to my place after I've taken the straight. When I get home I lean my bike up against the shed and I fee really hot and done for. I don't go straight inside though. Instead I flop muyself down on the grass underneath the lemon tree and I pick a lemon and take a huge bit of it. The lemons on our tree are as sour as sour, but I take a big bite because I feel so good. It makes me pull awful faces and roll over and over in the grass, but I keep on taking big bites until the lemon is all gone, skin and everything. Then I pick another lemon and eat that all up too because I don't want to miss a thing in all my life.

We have an old lady living next to us. She's pretty old and she doesn't do much except walk around her garden. One day I heard her say to Mum, 'He's full of beans that boy of yours. Full of beans'.

New Zealand teachers themselves have been in the past inadequately prepared to teach New Zealand literature. There is, as far as I am aware, no chair of New Zealand literature in any New Zealand university. However, all New Zealand universities now offer at least one paper in New Zealand literature. Some offer papers which look at New Zealand language.

Many of the teachers of English now in our secondary schools have been trained to value English literature, and - by neglect, in the main, rather than by intent - to undervalue New Zealand literature. The critical insights and scholarly apparatus by which students come to recognise the significance and worth of works of literature were in the past, brought to bear at best, on only a very restricted range of New Zealand texts and writers, and then sometimes from the perspective of the English literary tradition.

Teachers, of course, do not spring fully prepared from the universities or teachers colleges. They continue their education informally both from the established practices of the schools in which they teach, and from those sources in our general culture which are available to all: sources like literary magazines such as Landfall, or Islands, and magazines such as the New Zealand Listener. I do not believe that either of these sources have brought New Zealand literature the attention that it deserves in schools. In New Zealand secondary schools, the great determinants of the curriculum in English are the established practices of the national examinations. In spite of the invariable presence in these examinations of the chance to write about New Zealand literature, most teachers, in the interests of their students' examination success, in the past chose for study texts almost exclusively English or American. Although the selection of texts included, quite rightly, the masterpieces of English literature, they included, with less justification, some quite minor works as well. Such a tradition, once established, is not easily broken.

Outside the classroom, books, cinema, radio and television have operated on teachers and students alike in favour of English, American and to some extent Australian culture, and their influence has been inveitably reflected in the day-to-day work in New Zealand schools. Fortunately, again, recent initiatives in New Zealand television are beginning to counter this imbalance.

There are teachers who, in the face of these influences, help their students to develop an interest in a range of New Zealand works, but these teachers are to a large degree self-taught. In recent years, however, there have been signs of changing attitudes and of an increased awareness of the need for concerted action.

Of first importance in the creation of this changing climate have been, appropriately enough, New Zealand writers themselves. The success and continuing popularity of the 'Writers-in-Schools' scheme is one example of the way New Zealand writers are selling their own product to the consumers. The flowering of literature in the last decade is a further illustration, if proof is needed, of the creativity and imagination evident in New Zealand writing today. The work of groups like PEN, the Association of Women Writers, and the Maori Artists and Writers Society have also served to draw the attention of teachers to the work that is occurring today.

Despite this very positive current of interest, the future of New Zealand literature teaching in schools is in delicate balance. The New Zealand literary tradition is a young one, and thrives today, particularly in poetry and short story writing. But no tradition can expect to establish itself and survive through neglect. The continuation and strengthening of this tradition is - partly but importantly - in the hands of New Zealand teachers of English.

Some New Zealand writers believe that the question of whether there is a New Zealand literature is largely irrelevant: they are more interested in 'world literature' and the universal human experience. In one sense they are right, of course. But so are those who maintain that a writer, born in New Zealand and growing up there, cannot help but be influenced by that experience. That experience is what New Zealand students also share.

The images that New Zealand writers create are drawn from the world which the students know, and the attitudes New Zealand writers deal with, the moral stances they take, reflect aspects of the students' own world; the language these works are written in reflects, in the way that literary languages in any culture do, the variety of languages that students hear spoken and that they speak themselves.

I believe that greater attention should be paid in New Zealand schools to New Zealand literature on grounds which are familiar and, I believe, acceptable to teachers of English: that it contains works that serve the developmental needs of the students in New Zeanad; that it is relevant to the life that they live; that sections of it will contribute in a special way to their language competence. These arguments apply equally validly to the study of any national literature within the context of that particular country.

There is another consideration. It is fashionable to talk of schools and teachers serving the needs and interests of their students. Less common is the recognition that those needs and interests are often those formulated by the teacher, as perceived by the teacher. The teacher has to be alert not only to the students who are in the classroom but also to the changing world of which they are part and into full membership of which they are moving. A feature of our world today is its tendency to develop larger and larger administrative units in government and business, and for popular entertainment to become more and more homogenised and pre-packaged. As this tendency grows, so does the need for individuals to discover and define themselves in terms of the local and national (as opposed to the international or supra-national) culture.

I would like to turn now to the questions of value which are often posed by teachers when the place of New Zealand literature in the English curriculum is discussed. The objection which is put forward when teachers in New Zealand are asked why their curriculum shows an inordinate bias to English or American literature is the variation on this reply, with varying degress of bluntness: 'With all the wealth of Erglish literature which we haven't enough time to deal with adequately anyway, why should we spend time on the second rate"?

I don't hear that reply quite so often now, but the point of view is not unknown and I believe it is worth spending some time discussion it. John Matthews in his introduction to 'Commonwealth Literature in the Curriculum' makes these points.

'If we are to study literature and to judge it by absolute standards, we must remove it from national and linguistic contexts altogether ... But literature does grow out of national and linguistic contexts, and can only be separated from them at a very great cost. Unless one understands the preconditions, the unspoken assumptions, the conventions, the artist speaks to us with a very muted voice indeed ...'

In each of the enormously vigorous and expanding Commonwealth literatures I would suggest that there is a much greater need than has been perceived for a great deal of analysis and argument and dissection of the ways in which literature is developing. Older literatures always go through this process. English literature argued about it four hundred years ago, the US about a century ago. Now they no longer need to - their preconceptions are a part of their culture. But we are still making the grave mistake of trying to read our own literatures in the light of preconceptions made by others about themselves for very different environments. That is why we have to indulge at this stage, in certain inelegant forms of navel-gazing (always a suspect and contorted posture at the best of times), as we pose hypotheses about the nature of our own imaginative practices. We will find that there are all sorts of obvious things that perhaps we have not thought about much, that reflect the distinctive way in which each group of us views the world. This in turn has its effect on the ways in which we use language and what we mean by it. The device by which these differences may be brought most directly to our attention is, of course, the comparative method. It leads us to ask questions that otherwise might never occur to us."

Fiction is one expression of the national consciousness and makes its own unique contribution to a country's sense of cultural identity. National literature therefore has an important place in an English curriculum. But there are questions of value which must be asked in the selection of appropriate literature. To what extent should teachers continue to evaluate novels and short stories in terms of their predominantly local significance? Is there a double scale of values teachers apply when making critical judgements and qualitative assessments of literature? To what extent should teachers seek to end this kind of provincialism in literature, and foster, even demand, the more exacting artistic standards of value that apply to the literature of older and larger countries?

The same questions must be addressed by teachers of English in New Zealand schools because, rightly or wrongly, teachers tend still to see the literature curriculum as the fixed syllabus of set texts chosen by those who see themselves chosen to choose. Whenever a group of English teachers gathers together to talk about literature, talk inevitably returns again and again to two questions: Who chooses what books? What criteria inform the choice?

These are vexed questions, but important ones surely. If the literature curriculum depends upon the triangular relationship between student, teacher and work of literature, the selection of that work is an important determinant of what goes on in the classroom. I am talking now about the shared reading of a poem, play, short story or novel, rather than an individual reading. In a balanced curriculum in English, there's a place for both types of reading.

Finally, I am optimistic about the development of literature in New Zealand. There is already much that has been written that explores, through the literary witness, questions of identity in Aotearoa. This literature is being read in English classrooms in

New Zealand, and students respond with sensitivity and perception to the ways writers describe human experience in the islands of New Zealand. It is exciting for teachers of English to find that contemporary issues such as the development of multiculturalism through bicuituralism can be illustrated in the here and now of a New Zealand story, for through an experience which our students, both Maori and Pakeha, can identify with. Perhaps the contribution to the development of a national identity in the literature of Aotearoa is best summed up in the words of a Maori proverb:

> "Nau te rourou, naku te rourou
> Ka ora te iwi".,
>
> (My basket and your basket gives life (strength to the people).

Tena koutou katoa.

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